

Arinto de Bucelas

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BACKGROUND

Arinto (ah-reen-toh) is more correctly known as Arinto de Bucelas in order to avoid confusion with several other varieties with 'Arinto' in their names (e.g. Arinto Branco syn. Loureiro and Arinto do Dão syn. Malvasia Fina). It is an old variety (known since the early 18th century) and appears to be restricted to Portugal (4446ha in 2010), mainly in the Estramadura region near Lisbon where it was first grown before subsequently spreading to other regions. It is now widely planted in Portugal from the cool north (Vinho Verde) to the hot south (Alentejo). Arinto is particularly known for the fine white wines of Bucelas (where it makes up 75% of the blend). It is also used as a component of white Vinho Verde. Main synonyms include Arinto Cercial, Arinto d'Anadia, Arinto Galego, Arintho, Azal Espanhol, Chapeludo, Pedernã and Terrantez da Teiceira. Arinto is genetically close to Trajadura (an old variety grown in northern Portugal and north-west Spain). Somewhat confusingly, Tempranillo has Arinto Tinto as a synonym in Portugal, but it is not

related. Arinto is a recent arrival to Australia and there are just a few wine producers at present.

VITICULTURE

Budburst is late and maturity is late. Vigour is high with semi-erect growth habit. Bunches are medium and compact with small berries. Yield is low to moderate in Portugal where it is pruned both long and short; with some reports of a better crop if pruned long. It is reported to be both drought and heat tolerant. There is considerable clonal diversity in Portugal. Arinto is more susceptible to oidium (powdery mildew) than average and may be affected by bunch rot. It has good acid retention under hot conditions.

WINE

Arinto is known for fresh wines of crisp acidity with lemon, lime and green apple notes. With age they can develop smoky, honey flavours. The variety is used for both still and sparkling styles. The high acid of Arinto makes it a valuable component in blends (e.g. with Trajadura and Loureiro in Vinho Verde) but it is also used for varietal wines.

For further information on this and other emerging varieties, contact Marcel Essling at the AWRI (marcel.essling@awri.com.au or 08 8313 6600) to arrange the presentation of the Alternative Varieties Research to Practice program in your region.